

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 11152 271945Z

64

ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4309

INFO SECDEF PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK PRIORITY

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

S E C R E T LONDON 11152

EXDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-L

TAGS: PFOR, IC, UK

SUBJECT: ICELAND - BRITISH PROPOSAL ON FISHERIES DISPUTE

USUN FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

REF: LONDON 10886

1. FOREIGN OFFICE INFORMED US TODAY (SEPTEMBER 27) THAT ON SEPTEMBER 25 PRIME MINISTER HEATH SENT PROPOSAL TO ICELANDIC PRIME MINISTER PROPOSING WAY OUT OF CURRENT IMPASSE ON FISHERIES DISPUTE. MESSAGE BEGAN WITH STATEMENT OF HMG'S CONCERN ABOUT DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN UK AND ICELAND AND BRITISH DESIRE TO FIND ACCOMMODATION.

2. ESSENCE OF BRITISH PROPOSAL IS THAT UK WOULD WITHDRAW FRIGATES FROM ICELANDIC WATERS BETWEEN 12 AND 50 MILE LIMIT FOR TWO-WEEK PERIOD IN RETURN FOR ICELANDIC ASSURANCES THAT THERE WOULD BE NO HARASSMENT OF BRITISH TRAWLERS FISHING WITHIN 12-50 MILE ZONE; IT WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD THAT TALKS WOULD THEN BE RESUMED IN

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SECRET

PAGE 02 LONDON 11152 271945Z

EFFORT TO REACH AGREEMENT ON CATCH LIMITATION. BRITISH

ARE WILLING TO DISCUSS LOWER CATCH LIMIT. UNDER BRITISH PROPOSAL RESOLUTION OF 50-MILE LIMIT ISSUE WOULD BE DEFERRED UNTIL 1974 LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE.

3. FCO HAS COMMENTED TO US THAT THEY ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC ICELANDERS WOULD BUY THIS PROPOSAL (THEY CONTINUE TO THINK JOSEFSSON WILL HAVE LAST WORD) BUT BRITISH FEEL THAT THEY MUST MAKE GESTURE NOW TO LOWER THE TEMPERATURE IN THE COD WAR. EVEN IF PROPOSAL DID NOT LEAD TO RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS IT COULD, BRITISH REASON, IMPROVE THE ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN UK AND ICELAND.

4. COMMENT: THIS BRITISH PROPOSAL UNDOUBTEDLY STEMS AT LEAST IN PART FROM BRITISH SENSITIVITY TO ALLIED CONCERNS ABOUT FUTURE OF ICELANDIC MEMBERSHIP IN NATO AND SPECIFICALLY US CONCERNS ABOUT FUTURE OF IDF. AS FCO POINTED OUT, PROPOSAL WAS TIMED TO PERMIT CONSIDERATION BY GOI PRIOR TO DEPARTURE OF FOREIGN MINISTER AGUSTSSON FOR NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON.

5. IN DEFERENCE TO FCO'S REQUEST, FOREGOING MUST BE HANDLED AS STRICTLY NOFORN.

ANNENBERG

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